

## [Italian Shoe Machine Worker, Beverly #5]

ORIGINAL MSS. OR FIELD NOTES (Check one)

PUB. Living Lore

in New England

TITLE Italian Shoe Machine Worker, Beverly

WRITER Merton R. Lovett #5

DATE 4/5/39 WDS. PP. 4

CHECKER DATE

SOURCES GIVEN (?) Interview

COMMENTS [? ?]/[39?] [Mass.?] [1938-9?] Paper No. 5

. . .

Interview with

Roland Damiani

. . .

by

Merton R. Lovett

. . .

## Library of Congress

"As well as remembered."

### Interview with Roland Damiani

BY Merton R. Lovett

. . . .

(from memory)

"Yes, I read it in the papers. The government will no longer attack the United Shoe Machinery Company.

"Well, Mr. Lovett, how can it be a monopoly so long as the company has competition?

"Certainly the competition is small. That proves, does it not, that the United Shoe is better managed and has a smarter organization?

"The royalty system? There is much to be said on both sides. How could the small manufacturer afford to buy his shoe machinery outright? Without much capital it couldn't be done.

"A man, I understand can start making shoes with as little as \$5000 capital. Many have begun with less. The United installs the machinery. It instructs the workmen. It keeps the equipment in repair, and in return the manufacturer pays rent.

"I don't know that the rent is too high. Most manufacturers, I hear, prefer the royalty system.

"Of course a great concern, would rather own its equipment outright. If such was possible, they might sell shoes cheaper. Who knows. But what would become of the small shoemaker? All of them would be forced out of business. 2 "I do not think it is true, that a

## Library of Congress

manufacturer must use only machines made by the United Shoe. You were in the leather business. Was all your machinery made by the company? How about sewing machines, for instance? Are they not sold by the Singer Company?

"What was your trouble, Mr. Lovett? You objected to paying a minimum royalty, when business was slack and you did not use the machines.

"Also, the repair parts cost too much? And you couldn't return the leased machines, without paying the company a large sum for overhauling them? I never heard before, that unfortunate companies were forced to keep and pay royalties on machines that they no longer used or wanted, because the reconditioning charges were more than they could pay.

"Why, then, did you lease any machines of the United Shoe?

"Of course they were much better and more efficient. We are always making improvements. Our inventors are very clever.

"If other machinery manufacturers have not got as smart inventors, that's their hard luck.

"Sure the government protects inventors. Without inventions there would be no progress.

"Inventors are queer people. Few are good business men. Most of them are better off working for a good salary.

"I know lots of inventors. In the engineering department we test out their ideas. The United Shoe pays them very well. Some of them would starve if they worked on their own. 3

"Have you ever seen the company's museum? It is marvelous. There are thousands of interesting shoe machines and parts there. Why, they have machines in the museum which are much better than any on the market. Some are automatic. They will turn out shoes almost as fast as you could manufacture matches.

## Library of Congress

"Why don't they put them on the market? Well, I guess some of them are not wholly perfected. Besides it would not be good business.

"Well, the company is getting a royalty on each pair of shoes made. It would cost millions perhaps to replace a line of machines in twelve hundred shoe factories. And when the new machinery was installed the royalties for the United would be no more, since the numbers of pairs of shoes made in this country would be no greater. Besides the new machines would throw many shoemakers out of work.

"Why do they invent so many machines then if they do not use them? I don't know.

"For protection, Mr. Lovett? Protection from what?

"Oh, to prevent competition? I don't know. It may be that no one can invent a shoe machine now without infringing on some patent, owned by the U.S. Machine Company. If so, that is good business.

"Yes, all the time the Company is trying to invent machines which are better than those sold by competitors. Recently, one of the inventors developed a new cementing machine. Always before the shoe manufacturer must buy his cementing machines somewhere else. Now they will lease the new and better one from the United Shoe. It will also increase the demand for our cements.

"Oh, yes, the United Shoe owns many companies which manufacture supplies for shoe manufacturers. They are called subsidiaries. They make lasts, heels, tacks, knives, blacking, cement, thread, shoe boxes, laces, labels and many other things.

"No, these firms are separate from the Beverly Company. There is no monopoly for they still have competition.

## Library of Congress

"Maybe the competition is getting smaller all the time. If a company makes things better and cheaper, they deserve the business.

"What may perhaps happen sometime, or never, that's not for us to worry about.

"Of course, there are some inventors that are not happy to see their inventions filed in the museum instead of being used. But, as I said before, Mr. Lovett, inventors are often different from other people.

"Well, there was an inventor named Julian. He invented the Julian rounder, then many other things. Some of them were not manufactured. Bye and bye he resigned. He wanted to sell his undeveloped ideas to some shoe manufacturer.

"No, he did not succeed. He is an old man now, on relief. If he had stayed on with the United Shoe, he would be enjoying a fine pension.